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Interference of Native Language in
English Language Acquisition in Santa Cruz and Calheta Secondary schools

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The Juri,

Praia, March 2012

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my great GOD, who always carries me in his arms in my darkest moments.

“Give thanks to the LORD for he his good”

Psalm 107:1

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the interference of native language when students are learning a foreign language, in this case English.

According to this study, interferences from the native language such as lexical-semantic and phonological are not infrequent. It is one of the main barriers that create difficulties when learning English.

The outcome of this study is presented at the end of the *Monografia*: to provide English-language teachers and students the most significant linguistic interferences that occur during the learning process of English language. Furthermore, some teaching strategies are discussed to avoid the biases that appear due to the interferences of the native language. As a result of this study, I hope to contribute to the learning success among English-language students.

CONTENTS

Dedication.....	03
.Acknowledgements.....	04
Abstract.....	05

INTRODUCTION	08
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CHAPTER I - IMPACT IN THE PROCESS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

1. The Role of English Language and how it is learned	09
2. Model of L2 or L3 language acquisition and learning strategies	11
3. The challenges of English language learning in Cape Verde (Interference of Native Language when Learning English).....	13
4. Theories of Transfer.....	14
5. Factors Affecting Transfer.....	16
6. Interference of Native Language in Foreign Language Acquisition.....	17
7. Types of Interference (Positive and Negative)	18

CHAPTER II - PHONETICS IN THE ACQUISITION OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

1. The Phonetics in the process of learning the English language	20
2. Problems that affect the Pronunciation of English as a Foreign Language (EFL)	21
3. Interference of Creole during the English-language learning process	22
3.1. Phonology.....	23
3.2. Verbs	24
3.3. Nouns/Numbers	25
3.4. Adjectives	26
3.5. Articles.....	26
3.6. Prosody.....	27
4. Phonetics and its use in foreign language learning	27

CHAPTER III - TEACHING MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGIES USED IN THE CLASSROOM

1- The concept and role of teaching materials	29
2- Methodologies used in EFL teaching process in Cape Verde.....	30
3 - Performance of English Teachers in the Teaching of English language.....	31

CHAPTER IV - THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Context of English Language teaching in Cape Verde.....	33
2. Research	34
2.1 Research Question and Objectives	34
2.2 Target Population.....	34
2.3 Research Method.....	34
2.4 Procedure for data collection.....	35
3. Data Analysis	35
3.1. The Teachers' Questionnaire.....	35

CONCLUSION	43
-------------------------	----

TREATMENT OF DATA	46
--------------------------------	----

APPENDIX 1	56
-------------------------	----

APPENDIX 2	59
-------------------------	----

APPENDIX 3	60
-------------------------	----

BIBLIOGRAPHY	64
---------------------------	----

INTRODUCTION

In Cape Verde, Creole is the first language (L1). It is used for informal contexts and for everyday communication. On the other hand, the official language is Portuguese (L2), which is used in formal situations. English is learned as a third language (L3).

This study deals with the interference of L1 when learning L3. It is based on theoretical work from various authors and teacher's responses from a survey applied in Santa Cruz and Calheta High Schools, about some specific linguistic biases that occur during English language teaching in these two secondary schools.

An important finding of this Monografia is that while some students are consistently fluent in L3, others are not, and this fact is caused by the interference of L1. This study discovers that in the process of learning a foreign language, especially as L2 or L3, L1 plays a significant role, functioning either as a support or as an obstacle. The interferences of L1 can be positive or negative, depending on the proximity with the language being acquired. On the other hand, this study discovers that despite of some similarities in grammar such as cognates, in Santa Cruz and Calheta high schools the interference of L1 is primarily negative, because Creole and English languages have phonetic and grammatical differences. This study analyzes the common difficulties caused by interference of L1 in the acquisition of the English Language. It attempts to address this problem with the question: *How does the Cape Verdean language (L1) interfere with English-language (L3) learning?*

This Monografia is composed of four chapters. The first chapter introduces the impact in the learning of English and its role in Cape Verdean society. The focus is on the main purpose of this dissertation, i.e., the interference of the mother tongue in foreign language acquisition. This study identifies how the interference occurs and the consequences for speakers of Cape Verdean language. The second chapter is devoted to the analysis of the pronunciation and phonetics. It analyzes the main difficulties caused by the interference in pronunciation that Cape Verdean students deal with when learning English. The third chapter deals with the methodology used in the classroom, which is connected to the performance of the English-language teachers and to the materials used in the classroom. The last chapter deals with the research methodology. The focus is on the context of teaching English

language in Cape Verde, the procedures of data collection from the field research and its analysis.

CHAPTER I

IMPACT IN THE PROCESS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

1- The Role of English Language and how it is learned

Language is one of the most important components of a culture. It is a system of communication used by a particular community or country. Cunha and Cintra, define language as:

um sistema gramatical pertencente a um grupo de indivíduos. Expressão da consciência de uma colectividade, a Língua é o meio porque ela concebe o mundo que a cerca e sobre ele age. Utilização social da faculdade de linguagem, criação da sociedade, não pode ser imutável, ao contrário tem de viver em perpétua evolução, paralela à do organismo social.¹

Due to the importance of language, Maria Trigueiro Santos (2010) states that the willing to learn languages has always been present in the mind of the mankind, either for communication with other nations or for other reasons such as to understand the culture of other people, politics, social promotion, to have access to religions or to dominate other nations. The author believes that even without globalization and technology development, mankind had already understood the importance to learn other languages.

Regarding the importance of the English language, the Wikipedia entry "*English Language*",² states that it is the third largest language according to the number of native speakers after Mandarin Chinese and Hindi. Moreover, it is the language with the broadest geographical distribution, with substantial communities of native speakers in 103 countries on all continents. These facts are considered as supports and opportunities to the learners to practice it. The export of the English language began in the twelfth century with the plantations in Ireland and Scotland, and continued with the seventeenth-century settlements in North America and the West Indies. Above all, it is the great population growth in the United

¹ Cunha and Cintra, Nova Gramática do Português Contemporâneo (1984), p.1.

² English Language. In: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language, cited November 25th, 2011

States, supported by massive immigration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and more recently by its economic expansion (and technological globalization as well as British Imperialism) that has given the English language its present standing in the world.

In addition, the article author states that about 400 million people in the British Isles, U.S.A., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and other parts of the world, speak English as their mother tongue. Also in the former British colonies in Africa and Asia (what is still roughly included in the Commonwealth), where many local languages are spoken, no common language was found to replace the English language.

Furthermore, in the article "*English as a world Language*",³ it is established that people who speak English fall into one of three groups: those who have learned it as their mother language; those who have learned it as their second language and those who are forced to use it for practical purposes, i.e., administrative, professional or educational (for example, tour guides, pilots, flight attendants, etc.). The author estimates that about 400 million people speak English as the first language, 700 million as the second or foreign language, and over a billion people learned English for other purposes, such as pleasure, business, and professional purposes. Additionally, the article points out the fact that over 80 per cent of the information stored in the world's computers is in English and more than a half of the world's scientific journals are also in English. It is considered the main language on the internet, due to the enormous political and economic power of the USA, as well as the heritage of British imperialism. Consequently, more people demand to be understood in English and this is not only valid for native speakers. Prodromou (1997) argues that up to 80 per cent of THE communication in English takes place among non-native speakers. In short, English language is becoming the way most people get around, and the linguistic channel to get things done, to make foreign friends, to do business with foreign countries and to get information. So it can be concluded that if someone learns English language correctly, access may be granted to one of the most important and brightest bodies of literature that has ever existed.

Besides the fact that English is a foreign language in Cape Verde, it is a language of prestige among Cape Verdean people. It may be because of the strong migrations and economic relation with English-speaking countries, such as Nigeria, South Africa and others in Africa, plus Sweden, the Netherlands in Europe, Indonesia, India and other countries in Asia, that have contributed to a positive attitude towards English-language learning in Cape Verde. According to Maria Trigueiro Santos (2010), the relationship between Cape Verde and

³ English as a world Language in: <http://www.maturita.cz/referaty/referat.asp?id=3724>

English speaking countries is very old. She states that many factors have contributed to increase its prestige among Cape Verdeans, including whaling and salt production mainly in Maio and Boa Vista by the Americans and other foreign countries in 1740. Business ties strengthened the relationship between the United States and Cape Verde. Besides that, the huge movement of English – speaking sailors in Sao Vicente port, who were searching for urzela, (that was used to make tissue and colors production) contributed to increase its prestige.

The emigration was also an important factor. Cape Verdeans started emigrating to the United States of America in 1750 on board of ships like *Ernestina*, *Nantucket* and others that sailed to Cape Verde in business activities. Maria Trigueiro Santos (2010) argues that the English language was already established in Cape Verde long ago before its formal teaching. People needed to communicate with the English speaking foreigners and other nationalities that were on the island in order to do business.

Nevertheless, when English was formally introduced in the school curriculum in Cape Verde, as a foreign language, its learning often caused some confusions among students, mostly in terms of phonetics and grammar. A lot of students have difficulties in pronouncing the words correctly. In relation to grammar, there are frequent mistakes with verb tenses and other elements as adjectives, prepositions, etc. Specialists agree that when students begin to learn the English standard grammar they tend to over-regularize it. That is, they learn a general rule and then try to use it in all situations. For instance, Lieberman (1992) points out to the fact that the past tense of 97 per cent of English verbs is indicated by adding the suffix - **ED**, as in “worked”. So the students often apply it to the irregular verbs as well, like in the case of the following verbs: “give”, becomes “gived”, “take” becomes “taked”, and “eat” becomes “eated”.

2 - Model of L2 or L3 language acquisition and learning strategies

The L2 or L3 acquisition model of interest hypothesizes that, the target language input acts as the potential starting point for acquiring aspects of the language to be acquired. According to Long (1996), this model attempts to articulate what makes the input comprehensible and how it is processed to influence the development of the learner's linguistic knowledge. The model illustrated in Figure 1 is a simplified version of the one outlined by Gass (1997).

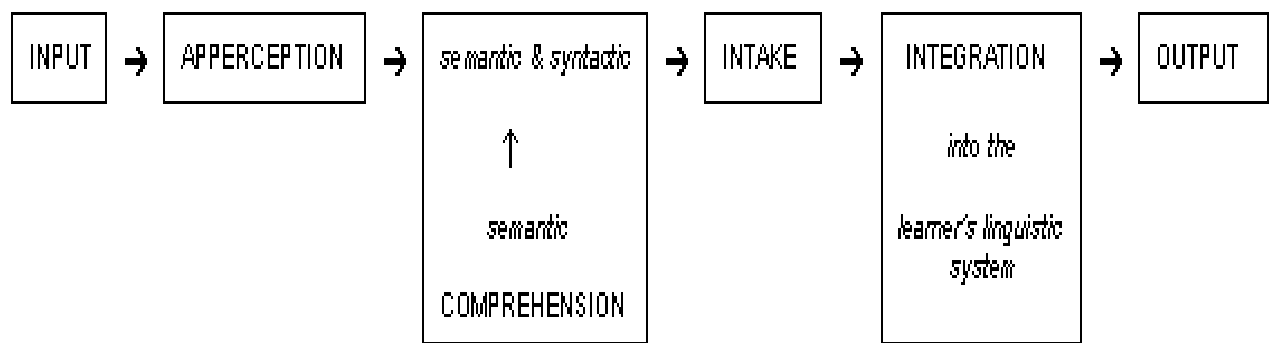


Figure1. *The basic components in the language acquisition process.*

Input at the left of Figure 1 refers to the target language that the learner is exposed to. Much of the target language input goes over the learners' head, but only the one which is perceived has the potential to be acquired. An important aspect of the learners' perception is their ability to notice aspects of the input. Therefore, one concern for designing instructional materials is to include features that prompt learners to notice important aspects of the language.

The next box, comprehension, represents the hypothesis that understanding of the semantic content of a message can be accomplished with or without any comprehension of the syntax. Semantic comprehension is not expected to help in the acquisition of the syntactic system because it may be accomplished through the recognition of isolated lexical items and interpretation of non-linguistic cues. When comprehension takes place through a combination of semantic and syntactic processing, the linguistic characteristics of the input become intake, that is, a comprehended language that holds the potential for developing the learners' linguistic system.

The integration is comprised of the processes for using or holding the intake in short term memory so as to influence the development of the linguistic system. This in turn affects the L2 output produced by the learner. The output is an observable result of the process, but it is also considered an important contributor to linguistic development in at least two ways. First, producing linguistic output forces learners to use the syntactic system and therefore to develop this aspect of their ability. Second, it elicits subsequent input from interlocutors, some of which may contain indications of difficulties with the learner's output which will result in the learner's noticing aspects of the linguistic form, making new hypotheses, and producing more output.

According to Maria Trigueiro Santos (2010), many linguists believe that the learning process of L2 or L3 is very complex. There are many variables that interact among

themselves and they should be carefully taken in to account during the learning process. Among these factors are age, methodologies used by the teachers, educational resources, learners individual differences, learning environment, teachers' characteristics, cognitive processes of the learners and learners' attitude and motivation toward the target language etc. She reminds that all these factors are competing between themselves to the success or failure of the learners. Concerning the learning strategies, authors suggest that learners should not limit themselves to memorize the rules of the target language and later use them when speaking. They should instead construct their own rules, based on the inputs received and try it during communication. Thus, the learner will not limit himself or herself in reproducing the exact sounds, words, rules and the grammatical structures that he or she is trying to learn, but he or she will have the autonomy to design his own goals towards the target language.

On her side, Brown (1980) suggests that every learner has his or her own learning strategy, including the transference of L1 rules to the target language, generalization of the rules, and simplification of rules. All this is to make learning easier and fast trigger the memory. However, students should be careful when using these strategies because they do not always produce positive effect, sometimes leading to misunderstandings.

1.3- The challenges of English language learning in Cape Verde (Interference of Native Language when Learning English)

As it has been stated above, interference of L1 is one of the difficulties that teachers and learners of English often face within the process of teaching and learning English.

Ashworth (1992) defines native language as the L1 or the standard code spoken in one's country. It is the language that the people acquire in the early years and it normally becomes the natural instrument of thought and communication. This language can be used in education, mass media and in formal situations.

In spite of the high status of the English language within Cape Verdean society and the degree of interest that could be expected from the learners, teachers believe that there are several obstacles to English language learning in Cape Verde. One of these obstacles is the fact that English is a foreign language. Consequently, it is not used in day-to-day life and conversations, so there are few opportunities to practice it outside of the classroom context. Another obstacle is that when the students reach the secondary school level they must learn it, sometimes without having mastered the Portuguese language and consequently they tend to

confuse the structures of L2 and L3. Based on these facts, since they are users of Creole language but not linguists, interlingual interferences are a serious problem.

Researchers have confirmed that the skills and knowledge of L1 can be transferred, either positively or negatively in the acquisition of another language. Depending on the original land or country, the influence of dialects pronunciation skills is an aspect that interferes as well in the learning of English language, mainly in pronunciation. In Cape Verde for instance, there are different L1 dialects varying from island to island. Therefore, the English-language learners tend to utter different pronunciations. This is perfectly normal and in these cases, it usually raises new English standards or varieties in the perspective of Judy B. Gilbert (2008). Gilbert argues that what really matters is to pronounce correctly and to be understood, not to have a native speaker pronunciation.

In spite of the increased learning opportunities that exist in Cape Verde derived of the introduction of mandatory English-language teaching from 7th to 12th grade, the surveyed teachers argue that difficulties in English language learning remain due to three important factors: 1) the interferences of L1; 2) lack of appropriate textbooks for each level of study, and 3) lack of opportunities to practice it outside the classroom.

1.4- Theories of Transfer

How does transfer occur? This section includes a brief overview of the theory of transfer according to Ormrod's "Human Learning –Theories, Principles, and Educational Applications".

An Early Behaviorist Theory: Thorndike's Identical Elements Edward Thorndike proposed a theory that emphasized specific transfer: transfer occurs only to the extent that the original and transfer tasks have identical elements. In a later study, Thorndike examined the interrelationships of high school students' academic achievement in different curricular areas. Achievement in one subject matter appeared to facilitate students' achievement in another only when there was some commonality between the two subject matters.

A Later Behaviorist Perspective: Similarity of Stimuli and Response since Thorndike's work, behaviorist views of transfer have focused on how transfer is affected by stimulus and response characteristics in the original and transfer situations. In general, the principles of

transfer which have emerged from the behaviorist literature (Osgood, cited in Ormrod, 1990) include:

- When stimuli and responses are similar in the two situations, maximal positive transfer will occur.
- When stimuli are different and responses are similar, some positive transfer will occur.
- When stimuli are similar and responses are different, negative transfer will occur.

As an example of this last point, Ormrod recoiled when he was a high school student and his class schedule included second-period Latin and third-period French. “And” is spelled in the same way in both languages, but it is pronounced differently (/et/ in Latin /ay/ in French). This meets the conditions for negative transfer (similar stimuli, different responses). On several occasions, his French –Language teacher corrected his latin pronunciation of “et” (Ormrod, 1990).

Human Information Processing Theory: cognitive psychologists according to Brooks cited in Ormrod (1990) some authors are now beginning to develop their own views on how and when transfer occurs. A currently prominent view of transfer is that relevant information and skills are transferred to a new situation only when they are retrieved from short-term memory within the context of that new situation. Given the low probability that any particular piece of information will be retrieved, as well as the limited capacity of short-term memory, many potentially relevant pieces of information may very well not be transferred in situations in which they would be helpful.

The presence or absence of retrieval cues in the transfer situation determines what relevant information, if any, is retrieved from long-term memory. A new situation is more likely to call to mind previously learned information if the situation and the relevant information are closely associated in memory. This will happen, for instance, if the new situation was previously anticipated when the new information was stored, so that the situation and information relevant to it were stored in association with each other. This may apply to Cape Verdean context. Cape Verdean student of English use Creole everyday to communicate. In doing so, they use their long-term memory, and when they try to communicate in English they use their first language to tell words that they do not know in the foreign language (which is their short-term memory), a language that they are not accustomed to. They transfer what they know from the long-term (Creole) to the short-term (English); the old into the new language.

Current Views on General Transfer: current views concerning general transfer are somewhere in between: general transfer is not as common as specific transfer (Gray cited in Ormrod, 1990), but learning occurring at one time can facilitate learning at another time if, in the process, the individual learns how to learn. The following section presents some factors that affect the process of transfer.

1.5- Factors Affecting Transfer

A number of variables affect the occurrence of transfer, including:

- “The more thoroughly something is learned, the more likely it is to be transferred to a new situation: there is often a trade-off between instructional time and transfer; the more quickly a topic is covered, the less likely it is to be transferred (Cormier 1987; Ellis, 1999; Gick & Holyoak, 1987). The implications of this finding for educational practice are clear: students should demonstrate thorough mastery of material if they will be expected to apply that information in future situations.” Warrick L. Carter⁴
- The more similar two situations are, the more likely it is that what is learned in one situation will be applied to the other situation: behaviorists have argued that similarity of either stimuli or responses is necessary for transfer to occur. Cognitivists have proposed instead that because transfer depends on retrieval of relevant information at the appropriate time, the perceived similarity rather than actual similarity of the two situations is important (Gick & Holyoak, 1987). Either way, one thing is clear: similarity between two situations affects transfer.
- Numerous and varied examples and opportunities for practice increase the extent to which information and skills will be applied in new situations: individuals are more likely to transfer something they have learned if they have encountered a wide variety of examples and practice situations (Cheng at al.,1986; Cormier 1987 cited in Ormrod, 1990). Individuals trained in this fashion store what they have

⁴ Warrick Carter, *Response to Judith A. Jellison's "How Can All People Continue to Be Involved in Meaningful Music Participation?"* “ In: <http://www.menc.org/documents/onlinepublications/vision2020/ResponsetoJudith.pdf>, cited January 22, 2012

learned in association with many different contexts and will therefore be more likely to retrieve information when they again encounter one of those contexts.

1.6 - Interference of Native Language in Foreign Language Acquisition

According to Jack C. Richards, John Platt and Heidi Platt (1992), foreign language acquisition takes place when the language to be learned is not L1. This is the case of most Cape Verdeans when learning English. In addition to this, Ellis (1997) defines linguistic interferences as a noise that occurs when the speaker or the writer applies the knowledge of L1 to L2 or L3. She emphasizes that interference occurs in any situation when the learners do not have a native-level command of the acquired language. Furthermore, Weinreich (1953) defines interference as deviations from the norm of either language, which occurs in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language. Similarly, Odlin (1989:27) states that transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired.

As shown above, it has been recognized that learners of a target language are subject to varying degrees of influence from L1. Therefore, researchers as Lenneberg (1967) and Seliger (1978) have shown that a command of native or close to native foreign language pronunciation is not an easy task, especially for learners who begin studying a language after puberty. They claim that learning an L2 or L3 is easier in early childhood because it is particularly important to learn correct pronunciation as young as possible to avoid phonetic issues. According to their theory, learning at any age by constant contact with native speakers in their own society is the fastest and the best way. It is advantageous to take foreign language classes because it forces the student to focus on the acquired language all the time. In addition, the learners immerse in the culture and they learn it at the same time, which can be a stimulus, because language and culture are complement to each other.

According to Dennis O'Neil (1998), since the learning process of L3 can be affected by the patterns of the L1, there is a probability of blending phonemes. For example, most Americans who learn French in high school or college pronounce French words with a distinctive American accent. O'Neil explains that grammar can also be affected. For instance, English speakers who learn both French and Spanish sometimes combine grammatical rules of both when speaking either of them. This author argues that linguistic interference can also

be a problem when learning and using another dialect of a language already known by a student. He illustrates the situation when idioms are literally translated. For example, the Spanish idiom "en boca cerrada no entran moscas" becomes "flies don't get in a shut mouth", instead of "mum's the word" when some native Spanish speakers use English language. He explains that some idioms are more difficult for non-native speakers to learn because they do not make literal sense. He argues that people tend to perform mental tasks with the language. For instance, some bilingual French Alsatians living near the border with Germany report that they count in French but do algebra in German. This happens because they learned their counting skills and simple mathematics in French at primary schools and abstract algebra in German at secondary schools.

1.7 - Types of Interference (Positive and Negative)

The author of "*Cognates Portuguese at the First Sight: COGNATES*"⁵ defines that positive interference or positive transfer occurs when the relevant unit or structure in both languages is the same. In this situation, linguistic interferences result in correct language production. An example is the use of cognates. It states that cognates are also called "Easy Words" because they have the same origin or are related in some way to others in a foreign language. People can infer their meaning even without a previous knowledge of the target language. According to this article, about 1600 cognates exist between Portuguese and English language. Below are some examples of cognates:

English	Portuguese
Real	Real
Important	Importante
Create	Criar
Separately	Separadamente
Eternity	Eternamente

⁵ Unknown Author, Cognates Portuguese at First Sight! In: <http://www.learn-portuguese-now.com/cognates.html>, cited November 25th, 2011

On the other hand, Windford (2004) states that language interference is most often discussed as a source of errors, known as negative interference or transfer. It occurs when speakers and writers transfer items and structures that are not the same in both languages. However, within the theory of contrastive analysis (the systematic study of a pair of languages with a view to identifying their structural differences and similarities), “the greater the difference between the systems... the GREATER is the learning problem and the potential area of interference” (Weinreich, 1953:1).

According to an online article named “*Language Transfer*”,⁶ the results of positive transfer go largely unnoticed, and such can have a large effect. It reinforces that generally speaking, the more similar the two languages are, the more the learner is aware of the relation between them, and the more positive transfer may occur. It gives the example of an Anglophone learner of German may correctly guess an item of German vocabulary from its English counterpart, but word order and collocation are more likely to differ, as will connotations. It alerts that such an approach has the disadvantage of making the learner more subject to the influence of “false friends” (false cognates).

Comparatively, the same occurs with Cape Verdean learners of English language. Students usually tend to find the correct meaning of English words by guessing from the Portuguese vocabulary.

Summary

In this chapter, different definitions of language interference by various authors have been evaluated, as well as its occurrence in the process of language learning. The authors pointed to the dependence on the similarities and differences between the target and the native language. Both teachers and students need to be aware of the similarities and the differences between the target and the native language. In this way, they can anticipate and avoid or minimize interference. One of the possible ways is to introduce the language to children as early as possible, or induce a total immersion in the target language community. Furthermore, transfer is the process of applying what has been learned in one situation to performance in another situation. Several theories of transfer have been proposed. Cognitivists argue that transfer depends on retrieval of relevant information. Behaviorists argue that a stimuli or response is needed for transfer to occur.

⁶ Davis’s English Teaching World, Language Transfer. In: www.eltworld.net, cited November 25th, 2011

Taking into account the different perspectives about transfer, the following questions should be posed: What is the impact of mother tongue and stimuli/response in learning a foreign language, and what are the problems that students face with the interference of L1 into foreign language? These challenges are discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER II

PHONETICS IN THE ACQUISITION OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

1- The Phonetics in the process of learning the English language

Phonetics is one of the first things that come to someone's attention when listening to the interlocutor, especially if it is a foreign language. When one tries to memorize a new word or a phrase, special attention should be paid, not only to its meaning, spelling and context of usage, but also to its pronunciation. The New Oxford American Dictionary (2006) states that pronunciation "is to make the sound of a word or part of a word, typically in the correct or a particular way."

When students speak in Cape Verdean classes, they are evaluated mostly in terms of pronunciation and grammar. Why do students have poor English pronunciation? According to the interviewed teachers, the answer seems to be that teaching English in Cape Verde does not include with phonetics lessons. Even if good pronunciation requires persistent practice in listening, speaking, and reading aloud, students at all levels of Education in Cape Verde do not receive such training. Normally they learn English word by word and they have to memorize the pronunciation of individual words.

Although the native speaker pronunciation is not necessary, there may be obstacles to successful communication with English speakers from other parts of the world. Patchara Vasarin (2007) alerts that too much accented or distorted speech may frequently give rise to misunderstandings, miscommunication and frustration. This author reinforces that incomprehensible non-standard pronunciation produces psychological distress in speakers, which is likely to block their efforts to seek clarification using alternative expressions with phonetically different pronunciation.

The teachers in the sample believe that phonetics should have the same importance as reading, writing, listening and speaking. However, in Cape Verde this is not given the relevance it should have because the national syllabus plan and the tests (See Appendix 3) do not include a phonetic section. Analyzing the national syllabus, the only topics covered are

grammar items and general cultural issues. No section exists for pronunciation and oral examinations (see Appendix 2).

According to *English Teaching Forum magazine* (October 2002), English language sounds and spellings are far from consistent and regular, even if it has a unique alphabetic writing system. The same combination of letters can have quite different pronunciations, and this may be one of the causes of students' pronunciation difficulties. The author exemplifies that the sound of "ch" in "chair", "Christmas", and "machine" are pronounced, respectively as [tʃ], [K] and [ʃ]. The letter "a" in "page", "tall", "dare", "rabbit" and "dilemma", are respectively, pronounced as [eɪ], [ɔ:], [ɛə], [æ] and [ə]. It is clear that the irregularity of sound combinations makes the learning of phonetic symbols indispensable for students. This issue of *Forum Magazine* supports the idea that an early practice of phonetic symbols will also be to the students' advantage in learning a foreign language. It should be introduced to students as early in their education as possible because pronunciation is one of the foundations of verbal language. It argues that with early practice they can minimize interference from their mother tongue and avoid phonetic variations that are very different from the standard. It alerts that if bad habits are formed, it will require double the effort later to correct them.

Hence, phonetics is absolutely essential when learning a foreign language. Teachers and the students should strive to improve it systematically. Teachers should not expect students to speak like native speakers, but they can of course teach them how to pronounce words correctly so that they can understand and make themselves understood to achieve a successful communication.

2 – Problems that affect the Pronunciation of English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

One of the main difficulties that many students face during the process of learning English, concerns the correct pronunciation of some words. It concerns the aspects or sounds that do not exist in the learners' L1. Thus, students may have difficulties with vowels, consonants, stress, rhythm and intonation. And when there is a different dialect of the same language, these difficulties are believed to be more serious. For example, in Cape Verde, words may be pronounced different by students from different islands. A student from São Vicente may pronounce the same English word differently than a student from Santiago. This may be a consequence of the different variations of L1. Taking into account these common difficulties, teachers would be more prepared to deal with them in the classroom.

Additionally, the learners also need to be able to identify particular features of phonemes such as stress, rhythm and intonation that give the language its distinctive sound. Bowen Tim argues that phonemes are worth devoting attention if the L1 is clearly the cause of unintelligibility. If this is the case, the vowel, consonant and diphthong sounds should be identified since they cause particular difficulties to the learners. The practice in the pronunciation of individual phonemes is worthwhile, even if any improvement is perceived as minimal. The author believes that setting clear objectives (for example: Identifying the sounds that need to be worked on) is surely the key in this particular area of pronunciation.

The same article defends that an effective pronunciation is much more than just the stringing together of a series of sounds. It argues that the facial expression of a particular language has a significant impact on attempting to pronounce another language, because by the time adulthood is reached, the facial muscles used in the articulation of the sounds of L1 will have developed to the extent that it requires genuine effort to adapt these muscles to the sounds of a different language.

Another difficulty that many learners encounter is the inability to read pronunciation symbols from pronunciation dictionaries. It is believed that the students cannot pronounce or read aloud unfamiliar English words without knowledge of phonetics, even when they can identify the words and find their meanings in dictionaries. Although the meaning is accessible, the pronunciation of the words remains a puzzle, but many online dictionaries include recorded pronunciations, which can be a support to the students.

In the next section some of the issues that Cape Verdean student face during the process of English language learning will be analyzed.

3 – Interference of Creole during the English-language learning process

Whether listening or speaking, most of language learners have at some point experienced difficulties with the sounds of a foreign language. As mentioned above, since Cape Verdean students learn English as foreign language, frequent mistakes in pronunciation occur. The origin of these mistakes may have two explanations: first, students speak exclusively Creole language in their everyday life and activities, a fact that give them no opportunities to practice English outside the classroom; second, every year they are taught by different teachers who do not have the same standard pronunciation due to the fact that they do not have the same academic training.

Furthermore, Trigueiro Santos (2010), states that Creole is the language that Cape Verdeans use to express their feelings and thoughts, and perceive the world. It is the normal

language used for everyday communication and activities. The first contact with foreign language is usually Portuguese, which happens when students watch television or go to the primary school. It is the language used for formal situations. It is only after this period that the students have the conscience of the use of these two languages. Consequently, reciprocal interferences occur between them in terms of lexical, semantic and syntax. The following section analyzes interferences between Creole and English languages.

3.1. PHONOLOGY

Researchers argue that some of the students' difficulties when speaking in English are those that lead to unintelligibility. One example is when the learners make substitution of L3 sounds for similar sounds in the L1, mainly with phonemes. Weinreich (1953) refers to this aspect as "actual phoneme substitution", which is when two sounds are identified as equivalent in the languages in contact. For instance, the learners usually make substitution of the Creole sounds [t], [f] or [s] for the "th" [θ] sound in English without realizing that these sounds differ semantically. Therefore, the word "think" or "thank" may be pronounced as "tink", "fink", or "sink", and "tank" or "sank" respectively. The [ô] sound also provokes difficulties, and it is usually substituted by [d] in words such as "this."

Trigueiro Santos (2010) explains that the problem with phonology emerges from the use of different strategies used either by the teacher or by the students in order to achieve the expected goal. She affirms that it is difficult for Cape Verdean students to produce the dental fricative sounds [θ]. The explanation is that this type of sound does not exist neither in Cape Verdean alphabet (ALUPEC) nor in the Portuguese alphabet. So to solve this issue, students substitute the sound [θ] by [d] when pronouncing the words such as the, this, that, there or though, becoming thus [de], [dis], [dat], [dere] instead of [θis], [θe], [θæt], [θere]. Similarly, they pronounce think, thing, or thanks, USING [s] or [t] to replace the sound of [θ] becoming thus [sink] or [tink] instead of [θink] or [θing], [θank].

A similar difficulty occurs with vowel sounds. Cape Verdean students tend to meet difficulties with both lax vowels, which are those pronounced without muscle tension, and tense vowels, that are those pronounced with extra muscle tension. As Creole language does not have lax and tense vowels, these sounds are not properly produced. Therefore the words as "ship" and "sheep" are produced with the same vowel sounds. Trigueiro Santos (2010) argues that Cape Verdean students do not see the difference between the long and short vowels. Examples are the words such as seat, sit, boot and book [i:] pronounced as Cape Verdean [si:t], [bu:t], [bu:k]. She points out that the silent words are also another problem for

Cape Verdean students. This is due to the fact that in Creole all graphemes are pronounced, while in English language they are not, therefore the students tend to generalize them to English words. Therefore, the words such as “talk”, “walk”, “half”, “tired”, “iron” and “island” are pronounced as [tɔlk], [wɛlk], [hɔlf]. [taired], [airen] and [aisland]. The same occurs with past tense of the regular verbs that students confound that the addition of **ED** is another syllable. Therefore, they pronounce the verbs “liked”, “talked” and “cleaned” as [laiked], [talked] and [cleaned] instead of [laikt], [talkt] and [cli:nd].

Sound deletion and sound insertion are another issue for learners. Denise E. Murray and Mary Ann Christison (2011) explain that sound deletion occurs when a single consonant is placed at the end of a word. An example would be the word "hold" pronounced without the final consonant and it would be pronounced as "hole". Another example of sound deletion is with vowel sounds in the middle words as in the words "abuse" or "refuse" that are pronounced as [abuz] and [rifuz], instead of [ə'bjʊ:s] and [rifju:s]. Sound insertion occurs in similar situations, but instead of deletion of sounds, students may insert sounds, usually a vowel after a single consonant. Examples of this would be with the word 'good' and 'school' that would be pronounced as [gudi] or [skul], instead of [gud] and [sku:li].

3.2. Verbs

Trigueiro Santos (2010), states that one of the common problems that Cape Verdean students have with the verbs is in the use of **S** and **ES** in the third person of singular. She explains that this happens because of two reasons: the students either forget to put them or they confound it with plural. Sometimes, they are not sure when to use one or the other. She goes further saying that when the verbs end in **Y**, the students confuse when to use only **S** or when to use **ES**. She illustrates the examples of the following verbs: “play”, “stay”, “obey”, “buy”, “study”, “carry”, “defy”, and “fly”. She argues that it takes time for students to learn that when **Y** is preceded by a vowel, only **S** is added, and that when it is preceded by a consonant the **Y** is replaced by **I** and then it is added the **ES**.

She argues that cognitive conflict occurs between L1 and L2, each of them fighting for the supremacy in the process of learning the L3. She explains that in Creole exists only one form of verb conjugation, verbs are not inflected like in Portuguese. The following chart illustrates the verb inflection in L1, L2 and L3.

L1	L2	L3
N ten un livru	Eu tenho um livro	I have a book
Bu ten un livru	Tu tens um livro	You have a book
El ten un livru	Ele tem um livro	He/She/It has a book
Nu ten un livru	Nos temos um livro	We have a book
Nhos ten un livru	Vos Tendes um livro	You have a book
Es ten un livru	Eles têm um livro	They have a book

Trigueiro Santos explains that in the process of learning L3, the students are surrounded by a language competition (Creole and Portuguese), affecting directly the learning process of L3. She argues that in Creole there are no inflection of verbs, adjectives, nouns etc, while in Portuguese inflection is constant and diversified. Therefore students tend to compare and transfer both L1 and L2 structures to L3.

Concerning the **S** added in the third person of singular, she says that students tend to confuse it with the **S** of possessive case or with **S** of the contracted forms of the verbs. For example students may write the apostrophe in the following cases: “He teaches”; “She wants”, instead of “He teaches”; “She wants”. So it becomes more complicated when it is to differ between the possessive case, the third person, the plural indicator and the verbal contractions.

Furthermore, the use of the past tense is also a problem for the students. As Brown (1980) points out they tend to generalize the rules. Students believe that all the verbs (either regular or not) use **ED** in order to inflect them in past tense. Therefore, verbs such as “speak”, “take” and “buy” are usually written as “speaked”, “taked”, and “buyed”. Similarly, students make generalizations with modal verb. They use **TO** before the main auxiliary verb. Examples are: “Can to go”; “Must to study” etc.

3.3. Nouns/Numbers

The formation of plural in the vision of Trigueiro Santos Maria (2010) is also a problem for Cape Verdean students, due to the generalization of rules. Students make words plural by adding an **S** to the word or noun, without taking consideration the termination of the word or if it is a count or mass noun. Words such as “water”, “coffee”, “money”, “bread” are difficult to understand that they are mass nouns and therefore they are not supposed to append an **S** for

plural formation. Similarly, students make mistakes with the following nouns: “man/mans”; “child/childs”; “foot/foots”; “mouse/mouses”, instead of “man/men”; “child/children”; “foot/feet”; “mouse/mice”.

According to Manuel Veiga (2002), the explanation for this is based on the fact that in Creole the plural is represented by addition of a quantifier before the noun and not by an S at the end of the nouns. This quantifier can be an adjective of quantity (Txeu/Mute), the plural of indefinite article (uns) or numbers (dos, tres, vinte). While in Portuguese the plural is indicated by adding S at the end of the noun. In this case there is another cognitive conflict between L1 and L2 structures, which provokes a negative interference in L3 learning activities. Whether consciously or not, the student transfers the linguistic competence gained in the L2 in a general mode to L3.

3.4. Adjectives

Concerning the use of adjectives use in the sentence, there are significant and frequent interferences either from L1 or L2 TO L3. Among these interferences, the position of the adjectives toward the nouns is an important point. For example, the sentence “rapaz bonito” is frequently translated as “boy handsome”. Similarly, “Casa grande” is translated as “house big”. Furthermore, students usually make the adjectives plural if the noun is plural. This is due to L2. Students tend to say: “books interesting”, instead of “interesting books”; “car blue” instead of “blue car”. In these examples, L2 overpowers L1 and causes interference in L3, thus difficulting students to understand that in English the adjectives make no plural.

3.5 Articles

Cape Verdean Creole has no definite articles. Indefinite articles exist and they are used in all situations of communication. The indefinite articles in Creole are UN/UNS and they are not inflected according to gender (masculine and feminine). So for example one can say: “un omi” (a man) and “un mudjer” (a woman). In Portuguese, the articles are O, A, OS, AS (DEFINITE) and UM, UMA, UNS, UMAS (INDEFINITE). They are always present in sentence and are clearly distinguished in terms of gender and number. The rules learnt from L2 interfere in the learning of L3. Examples are:

PORTUGUESE	ENGLISH	CORRECTION
O Pedro tem um carro	The Peter has a car	Peter has a car
As Baleias são mamíferas	The Whales are mammals	Whales are mammals
O almoço estava delicioso	The lunch was delicious	Lunch was delicious

While definite articles exist in English, there are certain restrictions concerning its use. For example, it is not used with proper nouns (John, Peter, Helen, Susan), and it is not used with count nouns or bare plurals. It is incorrect to say: “I like the music” or “The life is good”, but the correct sentence is: “I like music” or “Life is good”. Furthermore, the indefinite article is not used with sport names, names of languages or academic subjects, names of countries, street names, names of meals etc.

3.6 Prosody

Stress, rhythm and intonation are other aspects that may also arise difficulties for Cape Verdean learners of English language. Depending on the different dialects, stress in Creole is quite regular, with most words being stressed in the second to last syllable. Both in São Vicente and Santiago Creoles, the stress usually falls on the second syllable. Therefore, the stress pattern of English language may bring some difficulties to Cape Verdean learners.

On the whole, it seems clear that the beginner student attempts to make sense of the foreign language speech, and he/she relies heavily on the phonetic categories of L1. However, it will be too simplistic to assume that learners just replace the native language sounds for the L3 “equivalents” as the classic theory of transfer predicted (Lado, 1957).

4 - Phonetics and its use in foreign language learning

According to the article titled “*TEFL phonetics and its use in foreign language Instruction*”⁷, Phonetics is the study of the physical aspects of speech. Phonetics is broken down into three categories: articulatory phonetics, dealing with production of speech sounds and the actual organs involved in speech (vocal tract, tongue, lips, etc.); acoustic phonetics, that studies the physical properties of speech sounds, such as the properties of sound waves

⁷ Ken Muller, *TEFL phonetics and its use in foreign language Instruction*. In: <http://www.teflcorp.com/articles/42-tefl-phoneticsphonology/130--phonetics-and-its-uses-in-foreign-language-instruction.htm>, cited February 7th 2012

and the acoustics of speech; and auditory phonetics, which analyzes the way in which humans perceive sounds, and involves the anatomy and physiology of the human ear and brain. Nicole Dehe (2009) suggests that phonetics looks only at sounds themselves, rather than their meanings or the context in which they are used. The study of sound systems or linguistic patterns of sounds falls under the realm of phonology. Phonology claims that in foreign language instruction phonetics serves as a powerful, yet underused, tool in teaching pronunciation.

Additionally, the *New Oxford American Dictionary* (2006) defines phonetics as the study of human speech sounds. It includes the study of how sounds are physically produced, and how they are perceived by the listener. It states that the difference between phonetics and phonology lies in the fact that phonetics is a science about the physical production and perception of the sounds of the speech, while phonology describes how the sounds function within a given language or across the languages. So it can be recommended that it is very important that teachers of English as a foreign language use it well in order to diagnose and correct the pronunciation errors that students make. Furthermore, phonetics allows teachers to understand the connection between spelling and orthographic difficulties, and to choose the best way to overcome these difficulties.

However, linguist Patricia Ashby (2005) argues that phonetics is not an instant remedy for all pronunciation problems; it offers the means to develop good pronunciation through enhanced awareness of relevant aspects of speech. She adds that phonetics is just one tool of a foreign language teacher; it is not a comprehensive foreign language teaching method, nor is formal overt phonetics instruction even absolutely necessary for the teaching of a foreign language. Learning even a simplified version of the “IPA” (International Phonetic Alphabet) takes valuable classroom time and can be unnecessarily confusing for younger students. The benefits gained from the ability to use the IPA must be weighed against the time taken to teach it.

Summary

The emphasis in this chapter was given to pronunciation and phonetics during the acquisition of a foreign language. Some difficulties that Cape Verdean students in particular face when learning English have been addressed. If teachers are aware of these particular difficulties, it may be easier to overcome these issues during the learning process.

CHAPTER III

TEACHING MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGIES USED IN THE CLASSROOM

1- The concept and role of teaching materials

Instructional materials are essential tools in the English language arts classroom. They allow students to interact with words, images, and ideas in ways that develop their abilities in reading, listening, viewing, thinking, speaking, writing, and using media and technology. According to the article "*Guidelines for Selection of Materials in English Language Arts Programs*"⁸ teaching materials include textbooks, video and audio tapes, computer software, and visual aids. Concerning the role of teaching materials, Allwright (1990) argues that materials should teach students to learn, and they should give teachers rationales for what they do. From Allwright's point of view, textbooks for example are too inflexible to be used directly as instructional material. O'Neill (1990), in contrast, argues that materials should be suitable for students' needs. In case of adaptation or improvisation they should allow students to review and prepare their lessons.

Allwright emphasizes that materials have the power to control the learning and teaching processes. O'Neill emphasizes that they help the learning and teaching activities, and he exemplifies the case that many teachers and students rely heavily on textbooks. Students learn what is presented in the textbook and in the way that it is presented. So the educational philosophy of the textbook will influence the class and the learning process. Therefore, in many cases, materials are the center of instruction and one of the most important influences on what goes on in the classroom.

However, teachers should be careful when selecting the teaching materials. According to THE article titled "*College reading textbooks do not meet needs*"⁹, published by Kitao, K., & Kitao, teaching materials should be examined for level of difficulty and its relevance to the students' needs. They must be readable if they are to be truly accessible to students. Because readability formulas tend to be simplistic measures, such formulas should be used cautiously. Teachers' judgments about the difficulty of a work are more soundly based on complexity of plot, organization, abstractness of the language, familiarity of vocabulary, and clarity of syntax. Also, because the average classroom includes children reading at several levels of

⁸ Unknown Author, *College reading textbooks do not meet needs*. In: <http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/selectingelamaterial>, cited February 6th, 2012

⁹ Kenje Kitao, *College reading textbooks do not meet needs*. In: <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Kitao-Materials.html>, cited on February 20th 2012

proficiency, materials judged as inappropriate for whole-class instruction might be suitable for small-group use or individual book reviews by the more capable readers. Concerning its relevance to students' needs, he illustrates that reading materials which draw upon students' backgrounds are desirable. Both comprehension and motivation are often enhanced when students can activate relevant background knowledge as they read, connecting their personal experiences with vicarious experiences. Furthermore, materials should be suited to the maturity level of the students for whom they are intended. They should be weighed in terms of value as a whole, particularly their relevance to educational objectives.

2- Methodologies used in EFL teaching process in Cape Verde

Concerning the process of English language teaching in the world, historically, different pedagogical theories and methods have been used and experimented with the purpose to make the learning process easier and faster. From all the methods used are: grammar translation; direct method; reading method; structuralist approach; audiovisual method; situational approach; and the communicative approach. According to Winddowson H.G. (2004) each of these methods have its paradigms and hypothesis to defend its success for the language learning. This is due to the fact that languages are sensible to changes in the context of human interaction in communication and also the worldwide changes. So there is the need to follow the track of linguistic development and its impact in the teaching process.

Some of these methods have been in use in the process of English language teaching in Cape Verde. The difficulties in applying these methods rely on the fact that the teaching materials at hand do not reflect the students' reality mainly in terms of cultural aspects. They are monotonous, difficult and insipid, thus do not meeting or awaking the students interest or motivation. Furthermore, the teachers do not have access to the teachers' book, including the management key of the exercises and instructions and for this reason they have no orientation in case there are any doubts or complexities.

Nevertheless, Trigueiro Santos (2010) argues that the Grammar Translation Method was the methodology used by the teachers until the 1980's. The teaching process relied on translation of decontextualized text books or related to British and American culture, and grammar rules memorization. All the process was centered and monitored by the teachers. She explains that these methods were in constant changing, passing from one to the other. For example after the independence of Cape Verde, the method adopted was the structuralist method, agreeing with Skinner Behaviorist theory, that the language through the process of "stimuli and reaction" or in other words through habits and repetition. This author points out

to the fact that Cape Verde adopted the communicative approach method since the late 1990's. At that time the ministry of education adopted "Frontrunner" as official teaching manual, but teachers questioned it mainly in terms of its didactics. This manual did not reflect the principles of communicative approach methodology. Furthermore, the others that adopted after it did not reflect the Cape Verdean reality as well. Consequently they were not used neither by the teachers nor the students.

So, up to the moment, this is the reality of teaching English language in Cape Verdean secondary schools. Teachers and students rely only on photocopies, because there are no official materials adopted by the Ministry of Education for orientation. Teachers are supposed to arrange their own and individual materials and students are supposed to make photocopies.

3 - Performance of English Teachers in the Teaching of English language

It is perceived that the children who are repeatedly exposed to a language outside the classroom context will learn it sooner or later. They may do it unconsciously rather than as a form of study. However, as language learners outside schools, they need to be motivated, to listen to it and to have opportunities to use it. Furthermore, many people believe that if students do not have a chance to activate their knowledge in the context of a classroom, they may find transference issues more problematic. However, since the late 1970s, there has been a movement to make learners rather than teachers the center of language learning. According to this approach to teaching, learners are more important than teachers, materials, curriculum, methods, or evaluation. As a matter of fact, curriculum, materials, teaching methods, and evaluation should all be designed for learners and their needs. It is the teacher's responsibility to check to see whether all of the elements of the learning process are working well for learners and to adapt them if they are not.

In other words, learners should be the center of instruction and learning. The curriculum is a statement of the learning goals, methods etc. The role of teachers is to help learners to learn. Teachers have to follow the curriculum and provide, make, or choose materials. They may adapt, supplement, and elaborate on those materials and also monitor the progress and needs of the students and finally evaluate students. The English-language teacher needs to have an appropriate knowledge covering all the circumstances and contents. Students have four basic needs: speaking, listening, comprehension and practice (Harmer 1998). Hammer suggests that people who are involved in the teaching process should be aware of strategies that need to be present in a language class to help the students' learning.

Also, the teachers must be conscious of the difference between the target language and the students' L1.

One of the functions of the teachers of English language is to confront the students with language so they can use it later. Hall (1997:4) argues that the teachers should provide a wide range of strategies in order to meet the needs and expectations of their students, taking always in consideration the different learning styles, motivations, preferences, etc. It can be concluded that one of the most important teachers' role in foreign language learning is the provision of a range of tasks or activities to match varied learning styles. The teachers should study their own method and overall classroom style, by analyzing their lesson plans to determine whether they give or not the learners the chance to use a variety of learning styles. They should assess whether their techniques to allow the learners to approach the task at hand in different ways. They should also understand if the teaching strategy being used is implicit, explicit or both.

Summary

Despite the fact that learners should be the center of instruction, materials often control the instruction, since teachers and learners tend to rely heavily on them. Materials need to have an underlying instructional philosophy, approach, method and technique which suit the students and their needs. They should be written in correct, natural, and current English. Teachers need to look for good materials, both commercial and non-commercial, all the time. They also need to be aware of published and copyright issues concerning materials. It is important for teachers to know how to choose the best material for instruction, how to make supplementary materials for the class, and how to adapt materials in order to meet the principles of the methodology currently being used in Cape Verde.

CHAPTER IV

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Context of English Language teaching in Cape Verde

To understand how Cape Verdean students and teachers face the problem of transfer from Creole into English, first it is necessary to understand the process of English language learning and teaching at Cape Verdean schools.

English is a foreign language in Cape Verde, so it is not normally used as a means of communication in everyday life. It has been an optional subject at secondary schools, until the academic year 2010/2011, chosen in the first cycle (seventh grade) and in the third cycle (eleventh grade). Now, it is mandatory from 7th to 12th grade. The amount of teaching hours per week is displayed in the following table:

GRADES	NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK
7th and 8th grade	4
9th and 10th grade	3
11th and 12th grade (Science & Technology Area)	3
11th and 12th grade (Arts)	3
11th and 12th grade (Humanities)	4
11th and 12th grade (Economics)	3

Concerning the teaching process, the Ministry of Education provides a national syllabus plan to all the schools, from which the teachers base their lesson plans. The national syllabus plan includes grammar topics and general culture items. It does not include any section of oral skills. As a result, on the tests teachers focus primarily on grammar and reading comprehension. (See appendix 3).

2. Research

2.1 Research Question and Objectives

This research analyzes the possible language interference of Creole in the English Language learning process, specifically in the phonetics and grammar. Key questions about grammar structures and stress phonemes, cognates, adjectives, articles and verbs were asked to the English teachers in two secondary schools, Escola Secundaria Alfredo da Cruz Silva and Escola Secundaria de Calheta S. Miguel. Using this research, I hope to defend the results of the surveys and respond to my research question which is “*How does the Cape Verdean language (L1) interferes on English-language (L3) learning?*” Therefore, the following items are the objectives of this study:

- a) To identify the interferences of Creole language in the process of English language learning, basically in the structures mentioned above;
- b) To identify the challenges that teachers and students face in the process of teaching/learning of English as a foreign language due to mother tongue interference;
- c) To provide solutions or suggestions regarding teaching;

2.2 Target Population

The target population of this research consisted of twenty teachers of English from two high schools in the interior of Santiago Island, Escola Secundaria Alfredo da Cruz Silva and Escola Secundaria de Calheta. In order to ensure proportionality, I decided to interview ten teachers from each school, which is almost the total universe of teachers (80 percent) in both schools.

2.3 Research Method

To conduct this research I designed a teacher questionnaire (See Appendix 1), including four parts:

PART 1- Professional details; the objective is to identify possible variables that influence teachers' response.

PART 2- The concept of language transfer; the objective is to understand how familiar the teachers are with language transfer.

PART 3- Phonetics and Grammar (types of transfer); the objective is to identify the different types of interference that occur within different features of phonetics (stress and phonemes) and grammar (structures, verbs, adjectives, articles and numbers).

PART 4- Methodologies and teaching Materials; the purpose is to identify the different types of materials used by the teachers and their effectiveness to minimise the interference issue.

To collect information, I went to the schools and I interviewed the teachers personally, so that I could explain or clarify the questions in case they had any doubts. This would avoid misunderstandings and assure the obtention of objective data.

2.4 Procedure for data collection

To find the teachers together and save time, I went to each school on the day of their coordination meeting.

3. Data Analysis

3.1. The Teachers' Questionnaire

The data collected is analysed in comparison with the information gathered in the literature review, and always taking into account the research question: "*How does the Cape Verdean language (L1) interfere on English-language (L3) learning?*"

In order to preserve the teachers' identity, they have been assigned numbers.

QUESTIONNAIRE PART I: STUDIED AND TRAINING

Concerning academic qualifications, the total of the twenty teachers who responded the questionnaire, 17 (85 Percent) have a Bachelor's Degree (4 years in English Studies); 1 (5 Percent) has secondary school level (12th grade); and 2 (10 Percent) have other qualification rather than English Studies. As regards to length of teaching or experience, 4 (20 Percent) have 3 to 5 years of teaching; 7 (35 Percent) have zero to two years of teaching experience and 9 (45 Percent) have six or more years of experience. Related to pedagogical training, 15 (75 Percent) have pedagogical training and 5 (25 Percent) do not have any kind of pedagogical training, which is the training related to teaching issues such as methodologies, evaluation etc. It provides evidences that the teachers are academically trained and have relevant working experience which enable them to be aware of language learning constraints, in this particular case the interference issues. This is very important to help students overcome or minimize the interference issues that appear during the learning process.

In relation to the level that they currently teach, four teachers (20 percent) are teaching levels 8th and 9th grade; 2 teachers (10 percent) are teaching 7th and 12th grades and 5 Percent (1 teacher) is teaching 7th, 8th, 10th; 3 teachers (15 percent) teach 8th and 10th grades; 1 teacher (5 percent) teaches 9th and 12th grades; 2 teachers (10 percent) teach only 10th grade and 2 teachers (10 percent) teaches 12th grade. As we can see all the teachers are distributed to all teaching grades, which means that the students at all levels are being taught by qualified and experience teachers.

QUESTIONNAIRE PART II: The concept of language transfer

Question 1: How would you describe language interference?

As it can be seen from the teachers' responses, all of them consider language transfer as the transference of mother tongue in terms of structure or knowledge of rules into the structure of a target language. This definition is in accordance with the literature review: According to Ellis (1999): "Transfer is the process of using knowledge of the first language in learning a second language" (See Chapter I).

Question 2: In your opinion, why does Creole language interfere in your students' learning process of English language?

In attempting to explain the reasons that Creole affects the learning of English language, teachers have different opinions. Fourteen teachers, (70 percent), believe that because the students tend to think in Creole in order to organize the ideas and then translate to English, the interferences are likely to occur. This justification coincides with the explanation that Maria Trigueiro Santos (2010) stated in chapter I, saying that many variables interact and compete between themselves in the process of L3 learning process. Within these factors she pointed to the cognitive processes of the learners toward the target language.

The remaining 30 percent argue that the fact that students have late contact with English, it is enough time to strongly internalize the rules of mother tongue and Portuguese language and transfer it to the L3 learning process. Following Brown (1980, see the literature in chapter 1), students develop their own learning strategies to learn foreign languages. Hence, they tend to use the knowledge of L1 or L2 as means of comparison or reference, thus creating more chances to interferences mainly by making generalization of the rules and structure of L1 or L2 to L3. Furthermore, the teachers add that students do not have any

opportunity outside the classroom context to practice and master the new structure of the language being learnt.

Question 3: Is the interference of Creole language positive or negative?

All the teachers inquired think that the influence from Creole language is negative. None of them mentioned one case of positive transfer. They provided various reasons to justify this fact. Sixty percent of the teachers believe that it is negative because the L1 and L3 have different grammar structures. Thus, the interferences will not allow the students to learn the important features of the target language as for example the correct pronunciation; 20 percent argue that it creates friction and misunderstandings in the learning process of the target language and consequently it slows the learning process. Finally, 20 percent states that it is negative because students tend to think in Creole and then translate into English. Since there is not a straight forward equivalence between many words and structures of English and Creole language, they usually make mistakes.

QUESTIONNAIRE PART III: In this section teachers were asked to give examples of language transfer IN the following areas: **PHONETICS** (Sounds, Phonemes) and **GRAMMAR** (structures, verbs, adjectives, numbers and cognates).

Table 1: Can you give examples of interference that occurs in the following areas: Phonetics (Stress, Phonemes) and Grammar (cognates, adjectives, verbs, articles and numbers)

PHONETICS	Stress	Percentages of the teachers in agreement	Explanation	Examples	
	Generalization of Creole accent to English words	100 Percent	In Creole the words are primarily stressed in the first or last syllable, so the English words that are stressed in the second or third syllables are factors of surprise.	Creole	English
				Flex <u>i</u> ble Supermar <u>e</u> t Pharm <u>a</u> cy Inter <u>e</u> sting Import <u>a</u> nt	Flex <u>i</u> ble Supermar <u>e</u> t Pharm <u>a</u> cy Inter <u>e</u> sting Import <u>a</u> nt
	Phonemes		Explanation	Examples	
	Students tend to pronounce every letter of a word	15 Percent	In Creole students do not perceive the difference in the sounds of p, t, d in the end of the words because it does not exist neither in L1 nor in L2	Talk Good Painted Danced	
	Students have problems with initial and middle “R”	50 Percent	Teachers explain that in Creole exists only one sound for “R”, while in English there are many: Initial, middle and final.	Examples	
				Rory Respect Car Bark	

	Students have difficulties with the pronunciation of English graphemes “PH”, “GH” and “CH” because they do not exist in creole	25 Percent	As these graphemes do not exist in Creole alphabet, students have difficulties pronouncing it when they find it in the sentences or they read it letter by letter.	Examples <u>Photograph</u> <u>Chair</u> <u>Tough</u>
	Students have difficulties with fricative sounds	10 Percent	These sounds are replaced by “d” sound, which is closest to its sound in English	Examples <u>The</u> <u>That</u> <u>The</u> <u>Though</u>
GRAMMAR	Cognates		Explanation	Examples
	Some cognates are positive	50 Percent	Students guess their meaning because the root or radical of the words are similar to the L1.	Important Cause Hospital Difficult

	Some cognates are negative	50 Percent	Sometimes, despite the words have the same root or radical, they do not have exact meaning in L3	English Come Intend Pretend Prejudice Constipation	Creole Students assume that it means: Kume (eat) Intende (understand) Pritendi (intend) Prijudika (to hurt someone) Konstipason (flu)
	Adjectives		Explanation	Examples	
	Adjective order	65 Percent	This is due generalization of rules from Creole structure: Noun + Adjective, while in English the rules are: Adjective + Noun	Creole Kaza grandi Karu pretu	English Big house Black car
	Students put the adjectives in plural	35 Percent	Because in L1 and L2 they have to put an “S” to the adjectives if the noun is plural, they generalize it to English language.	Examples Interestings books Hards jobs Goods musicians They are olds	

	Verbs		Explanation	Examples
	Problems to align the time expressions with verb tenses	45 Percent	Because in Creole verbs are not inflected according to time expressions, tenses in Creole are given by particles added before the uninflected verb (ex. "ta", etc.)	Right now, I do my homework Tomorrow, I go to the cinema Yesterday, we talk about it
	Incorrect use of verb tenses	55 Percent		I speaking to my father instead of I am speaking to my father last night I eated five hotdogs instead of last night I ate five hotdogs
	Articles		Explanation	Examples
	Omission of definite article	40 Percent	Because in Creole there are no definite articles.	Church is close to my house Instead of The church is close to my house
	Overuse of definite article	60 Percent	Students think in Creole and then translate to English, they transfer the L1 or L2 structure literally	I know how the people live in Kenya Instead of I know how people live in Kenya; The my father is a singer Instead of My father is a singer

	Numbers		Explanation	Examples
	Generalization of “S” to make plural	100 Percent	Influence from L2	Peoples (people) Mans (men) Mouses (mice) Foots (feet)

QUESTIONNAIRE PART IV

In this section, the teachers were asked about the materials used in their classrooms regarding their and their effects on language interference.

Question 1: What types of materials do you use in class?

All the teachers in the sample reported that they use any materials that seem to be useful for their students' level because there are no official materials adopted or published by the Ministry of Education. Most of the teachers referred to the same materials, such as flashcards, books, worksheets, photocopies and magazines. This goes in line with the teaching materials in the literature review, in chapter III, enlisted by the article titled “*Guidelines for Selection of Materials in English Language Arts Programs*”¹⁰.

Question 2: How appropriate is the design of these materials for your students?

The teachers presented varied opinions about the appropriateness of materials. From the inquired teachers, fourteen (70 percent), argue that these materials are appropriate because they select and adapt them according to their students' level and learning styles; This idea is supported by O'Neill (1990) that materials should be suitable for students' needs. (See chapter III). Six (30 percent), of the teachers had a negative view of these materials for not reflecting reality in Cape Verde. They reflect either British or American culture rather than the Cape Verdean culture. As a result, teachers have to make constant changes and adaptations and, furthermore, the copies are black and white and do not motivate the students.

¹⁰ Unknown Author, *Guidelines for Selection of Materials in English Language Arts Programs*. In: <http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/selectingelamaterial>, cited January 19th, 2012

Question 3: How relevant are these materials to your students' needs?

In relation to the relevance of these materials, teachers' opinions are divided. Seventy percent of the teachers believe that their materials are relevant to their students needs because they cover all learning styles and they can motivate students if they are adapted correctly, while 30 percent of the teachers affirmed that these materials are not relevant because they are not related to Cape Verde's context, so the students do not feel motivated. Kitao, K. & Kitao suggest the teachers that teaching materials should be examined for level of difficulty and its relevance to the students' needs.

4. Would you recommend other teachers to use these materials?

When they were asked if they would recommend these materials to be used by other teachers, 70 percent of the inquired teachers would recommend it if they are correctly adapted to the students' level and learning styles, but 30 percent refuse to recommend them. They insist that teachers should produce and use materials that are related to Cape Verde's reality and students level and learning styles.

Summary:

From this study it is possible to see that despite of some grammatical similarities between the English and Creole, the latter language has a negative impact on teaching and learning English as a foreign language. The common errors mentioned by the teachers in the survey are the same as those identified by some authors in the literature review, mainly by Maria Trigueiro Santos (2010), concerning the phonetic aspects (stress and phonemes) and the grammar structure mainly in the adjectives, verb tenses, articles and numbers (singular and plural). This explains how Creole interferes in the learning process of English language. In the literature review we saw that when students pick up their current habits and knowledge from L1 and transfer them to the target language, as a result, the students make mistakes, which may make teaching more difficult.

CONCLUSION

This study, analyzes the interferences of L1 in L3 acquisition. Throughout the research, the difficulties caused by the interference of L1 on L3 have been identified. This study will help teachers and students of English language to become more familiar with the problems that may occur during the learning process of L3, in this particular case, the English language.

To support this study, I found useful information revising literature from theory authors about this subject. The information obtained was tested through the methodology of questionnaires distributed to teachers. This information reinforces the need for teachers and students to be aware of possible linguistic interference that may occur during the learning process of English. Moreover, it is an aid to better perform as an English-language teacher and to succeed as a learner. According to the theories of language acquisition presented on the revision of literature and from the field research conducted in two secondary schools (located in the interior of Santiago Island), the learners of L3 are subject to varying degrees of interference from L1. These interferences occur in different fields of language skills, such as writing and speaking. Emphasis was given more to the speaking skills (phonetics), with a focus on the pronunciation.

The conclusion is that the mother tongue (L1) interference in the acquisition of English language (L3) is negative, with the exception of cognates.

In the first chapter, I presented an outline including the role of English language learning in Cape Verde, taking into account the fact that English is studied as a foreign language, and that it is relevant to most Cape Verdeans. The first chapter also includes the purpose of this Monografia, which is to study the interference of Creole language in the process of acquiring English-language skills.

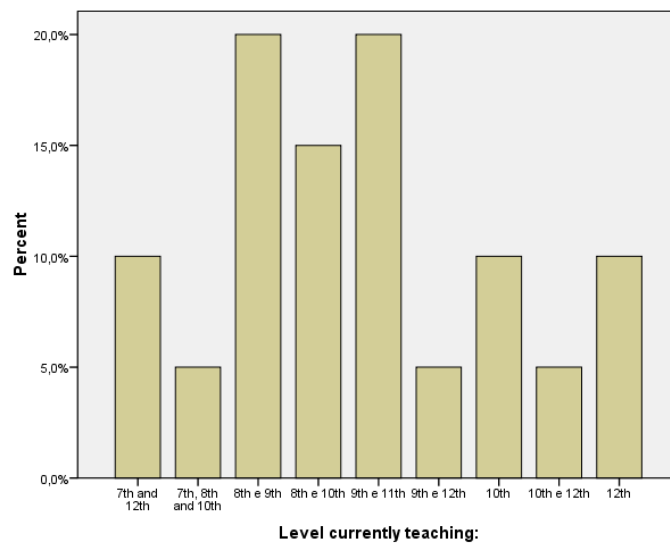
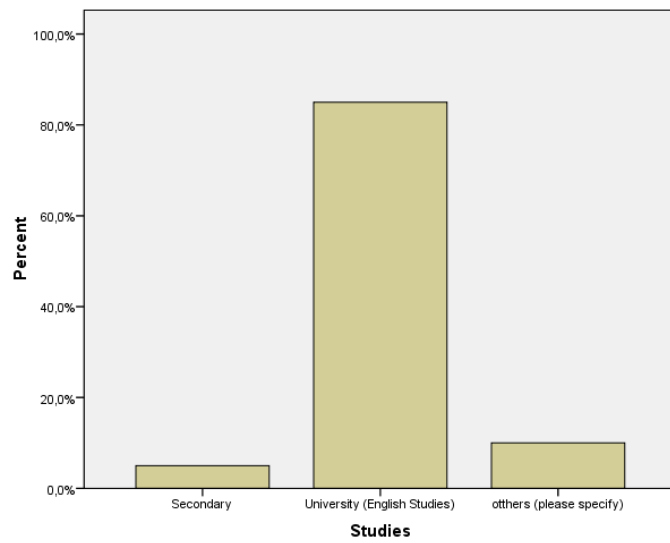
Among the major findings from the literature and field research, it has been identified that teachers play a significant role in the learning process of L3. They must adopt techniques and strategies to improve their teaching of English, and to help students to recognize the possible constraints or interferences that may appear during the learning period. Hence, I would suggest that the teachers need to perform in a consistent manner with their students. In this way, they help the students to overcome the tendency to give up learning English by assuming that it is a difficult language. Furthermore, they motivate successful learners of English language.

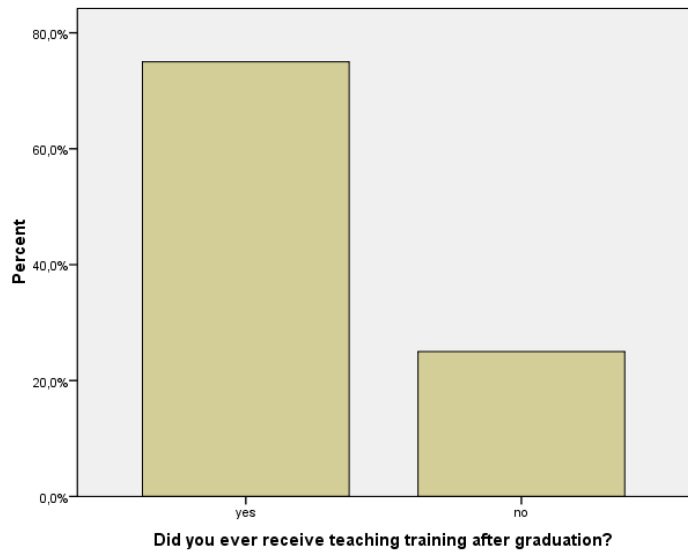
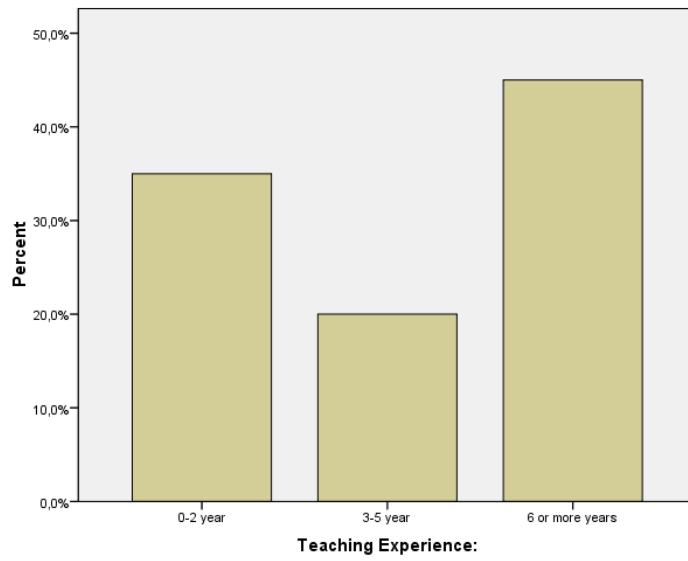
On a personal note, it was a very positive experience to work on this research. Language interference is an issue that needs to be considered in order to motivate successful English –

language learners and quality teaching of English in Cape Verde.

TREATMENT OF DATA

PART I





PART II

1. How would you describe language interference?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid it is the transference of mother tongue structure or knowledge into the struture of a target language	20	100,0	100,0

2. In your opinion, why does Creole language interfere in your students' learning process of English language?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid 1. Creole interferences in the students learning process of English language because the students tend to think in creole in order to organize the ideas and then translate to English, so interferences are likely to occur.	14	70,0	70,0

2. The fact that the students have a late contact with English language, they will have strongly internalized the rules of mother tongue and Portuguese language, so they tend to use these knowledge as comparison or reference. Furthermore they do not have any opportunity to practice and the new structure learnt.	6	30,0	30,0
Total	20	100,0	100,0

3. Is the interference of Creole language positive or negative?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Negative	20	100,0	100,0

3.1. Why is the interference positive or negative?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid 1. It is negative because it will not allow the students to learn the important features of the target language as for example the correct pronunciation.	12	60,0	60,0
2. It creates friction and misunderstandings in the learning process of target language and consequently it will slow the learning process.	4	20,0	20,0
3. It is negative because as students tend to think in creole and then translate to English, they usually make mistakes because there may not have the correct equivalence of words or structure in English Language	4	20,0	20,0
Total	20	100,0	100,0

PART III

1. Examples of English Stress that are affected by the interference from Creole language.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Generalization of Creole accent to English words	20	100,0	100,0

2. Examples of English phonemes that are affected by the interference from Creole language.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid 1. Students tend to pronounce every letter of a word	3	15,0	15,0
2. Students have problems with initial and middle “R” because it sounds different in Cape Verdean Alphabet	10	50,0	50,0
3. Students have difficulties with the pronunciation of graphemes “PH” and “CH” because they do not exist in creole	5	25,0	25,0

4. Students have difficulties with fricative sounds because they do not exist in creole	2	10,0	10,0
Total	20	100,0	100,0

3. Examples of English cognates that are affected by the interference from Creole language.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid 1. Some cognates are positive	10	50,0	50,0
2. Some cognates are negative	10	50,0	50,0
Total	20	100,0	100,0

4. Examples of adjectives that are affected by the interference from Creole language.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid 1. Adjective order	13	65,0	65,0
2. Students put the adjectives in plural	7	35,0	35,0
Total	20	100,0	100,0

5. Examples of English verbs that are affected by the interference from Creole language.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid 1. Problems to align the time expressions with verb tenses	9	45,0	45,0
2. Incorrect use of verb tenses	11	55,0	55,0
Total	20	100,0	100,0

6. Examples of articles that are affected by the interference from Creole language.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid 1. Omission of definite article	8	40,0	40,0
2. Overuse of definite article	12	60,0	60,0
Total	20	100,0	100,0

7. Examples of numbers affected by the interference from Creole language?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Generalization of "S" to make plural	20	100,0	100,0

PART IV

1. What types of materials do you use in your class?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Flashcards, books, worksheets, photocopies, magazines	20	100,0	100,0

2. How appropriate is the design of these materials for your students?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid 1. The materials are appropriate because they are chosen and adapted according to the students' level and learning styles;	14	70,0	70,0
2. The materials are not appropriate because they are not designed specifically to Cape Verde's reality, so teachers have to make constant changes and adaptation.	6	30,0	30,0
Total	20	100,0	100,0

3. How relevant are these materials to your students' needs?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid 1. The materials are relevant to the students needs because they cover all learning styles and they motivate students if they are adapted correctly.	14	70,0	70,0
2. The materials are not relevant because they are not related to Cape Verde's context, so the students do not feel motivated towards them.	6	30,0	30,0
Total	20	100,0	100,0

4. Would you recommend other teachers to use these materials?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid 1. Yes	14	70,0	70,0
2. No	6	30,0	30,0
Total	20	100,0	100,0

APPENDIX 1

Teachers' Questionnaire

Hello, my name is Eusebio Africano dos Reis Varela. I am a 4th-year student of English at University of Cape Verde (Palmarejo Campus, Praia), and I am researching for my B.A. dissertation. This questionnaire includes information that is key for my research, and I am thankful to you for filling it and for your precious time. The information herein will be used only for data collecting purposes and will be treated confidentially.

Name (optional): _____

Studies: Secondary_____

University (English Studies)_____

Others _____(please specify) _____

Level currently teaching:

7th grade_____ 8th grade _____

9th grade _____ 10th grade _____

11th grade _____ 12th grade_____

Teaching Experience:

0-2 years _____

3-5 years _____

6 or more years _____

Did you ever receive teaching training after graduation?

Yes _____ No _____

PART I:
The theory of Language Transfer

1. How would you describe Language Interference?

2. In your opinion, why does Creole language interfere in your students' learning process of English language?

3. Is the interference of Creole language positive or negative?

Positive _____ Negative _____

Why: _____

PART II:
Grammar (types of transfer)

Please exemplify the interferences that occur in the following areas:

Phonetics (Stress, Phonemes) and Grammar (Structure, Verb, Preposition, Adjectives, Numbers and Cognates)

Phonetics

Stress (Examples) - students pronounce comforTAble instead of comFORtable

Phonemes (Examples) - Think [fink] instead of [θink]

Grammar

Cognates (Examples) - real = real; create = criar (words that have the same root and meaning)

Adjectives (Examples) - The use of **his** instead of **her** or viceversa

Verb (Examples) - Yesterday, *I go to visit my sister* (*Incorrect use of verb tenses*)

Articles (Examples) - *The my best friend is a Sandra*, instead of *My best friend is Sandra*

Numbers (Examples) - one child and two children instead of one child and two childs

PART II TEACHING MATERIALS

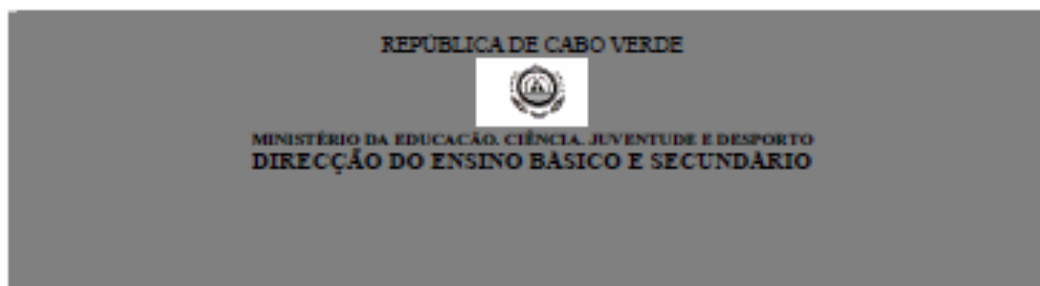
1- What types of materials do you use in your class?

2- How appropriate is the design of these materials for your students?

3- How relevant are these materials to your students' needs?

4- Would you recommend other teachers to use these materials?

APPENDIX 2



PROGRAMA DA DISCIPLINA DE

INGLÊS




3º CICLO DO ENSINO SECUNDÁRIO

11º E 12º ANOS

11 ^o ano	LANGUAGE FOCUS (grammar/structures)	LANGUAGE FOCUS (Functions/use)
	1. Present simple and continuous past simple and past continuous present perfect simple and continuous future forms - will / going to Active and passive	review of the tenses - time and tense, aspect, voice/ dynamic/ aspect
	2 - 2. Present simple Present continuous + always/continually/forever Will + infinitive Used to + infinitive Used to + gerund / noun = accustomed to	expressing/contrasting present and past habits
	3. Infinitive with to Infinitive without to Gerund	gerunds as nouns gerunds after certain verbs and prepositions infinitives after certain verbs and adjectives
	4. present perfect simple and continuous for and since just / already and yet	Expressing - unfinished past activity, present results of past activity
	5. . Mass and count nouns Compounds using some/any Much / many expressing quantity • little / little • few / few	Expressing quantity
	6. past simple and continuous / past perfect simple and continuous conjunctions of time(when, while, as, whenever, until, as soon as, by the time, after, before, since) prepositions of time(after, before, since, until)	Narrating

APPENDIX 3

ANO LECTIVO 2010/11	 REPÚBLICA DE CABO VERDE MINISTÉRIO DA EDUCAÇÃO E DESPORTO DIRECÇÃO GERAL DO ENSINO BÁSICO E SECUNDÁRIO	DURAÇÃO 2H00
PROVA GERAL NACIONAL DE INGLÊS NÍVEL 4 3º CICLO – RECURSO		

Read the text about Winston's family in Britain and then, answer the questions

ETHNIC GROUPS IN BRITAIN

"Historically, Britain is a country of immigrants. The Romans, Saxons, Vikings and Normans all invaded Britain at different times in the past and then stayed. Today Britain is a multicultural society of people from all over the world. Many young people are second or third generation immigrants and have two or more cultural identities. I'm a good example of this: my grandfather was born in Jamaica but he emigrated to Britain in 1950 like many people from the Caribbean, India and Pakistan. They came here to help rebuild the British economy after the Second World War. It was extremely difficult for my grandfather when he arrived in Britain. In Jamaica people speak English but their accent* and some of their expressions are very different, so people here didn't always understand him. Then he met my grandmother and fell in love. But my grandmother was white and her parents didn't accept him at first. But they got married and had a daughter, my mother. Then my mother married an Indian, my father, so as you can see I'm really mixed race!

Jamaican, Indian and British cultural identities are quite different. For example, Indian culture is rather* formal but Jamaican culture is more relaxed. The food is also very different and the religions; my mother is a Christian and my father is a Hindu. I'm not sure what I am! Sometimes it's quite confusing being part of three different cultures. But, in general, I think I'm pretty lucky because I'm able to experience the *best of all worlds*, and this makes my life rather* special.

*Vocabulary:

Accent - sotaque

Rather - muito

ANO
LECTIVO
2010/11



REPÚBLICA DE CABO VERDE
MINISTÉRIO DA EDUCAÇÃO E DESPORTO
DIRECÇÃO GERAL DO ENSINO BÁSICO E SECUNDÁRIO

DURAÇÃO
2H00

PROVA GERAL NACIONAL DE INGLÊS NÍVEL 4
3º CICLO – RECURSO

I. READING COMPREHENSION

A. Say if the following sentences are “True” or “False”. Quote from the text to correct the false ones.

1. Winton’s grandfather was Jamaican.
2. His grandparents met in Jamaica.
3. His grandparents were from two different cultures.
4. Indian and Jamaican cultures are similar.
5. His parents have different religions.
6. Winston likes having three different cultures.


B. Answer to the following questions about the text. (4 points)

1. Is immigration a recent thing in Britain?
2. Where did Winston’s grandfather come from?
3. Why did Britain need more immigrants in the 20th century?_
4. Where did the immigrants come from?

II. GRAMMAR

C. Rewrite the sentences starting with the given word(s) without changing the meaning

1. “Where do you want to go for vacations? India or Jamaica?”
My parents
2. His parents gave him a nice motorbike
He
3. Immigrants should speak only English at home.
4. He is Jamaican but he has British accent
In spite of
5. I couldn’t speak Punjabi so I couldn’t understand a word he said~
If

ANO LECTIVO 2010/11	 REPÚBLICA DE CABO VERDE MINISTÉRIO DA EDUCAÇÃO E DESPORTO DIRECÇÃO GERAL DO ENSINO BÁSICO E SECUNDÁRIO	DURAÇÃO 2H00
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PROVA GERAL NACIONAL DE INGLÊS NÍVEL 4
3º CICLO – RECURSO

D. Complete the sentences with the correct verb tenses.

1. It's difficult (know) how to behave in our family since there are so many different cultures mixed up.
2. Last year we (have) a party and friends (can/not believe) in their eyes.
3. Since my parents got married, they (be) in eight countries already. Life can be pretty though for this kind of family.

III. WRITING

Choose between the two options (A or B) and write a short composition (about 60-80 words). Remember that your composition must have an introduction, a body and a conclusion.

- A. Many immigrants live and work in Cape Verde. Talk about their lives and difficulties here in Cape Verde; cultural and language differences, etc.
- B. There are lots of Cape Verdean emigrants in the world. Which countries do they choose to live in? Why? Do you have any relatives living in foreign countries? Would you emigrate if you needed to?

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